

REMARKS

Following the decision on appeal, the appealed claims have been canceled and new claims 20-24 have been inserted by this amendment. It is believed that no new matter has been introduced in the new claims, and that they are supported by the description and examples in the specification.

It is respectfully submitted that the new claims distinguish over the prior art (US Pat. No. 5,525,675 to Masuda et al) asserted against the prior claims on appeal. Masuda discloses a thermoplastic elastomer having improved flexibility, strength and surface appearance, comprising a blend of syndiotactic polypropylene and an ethylene copolymer rubber which may be partially crosslinked.

In contrast applicants' invention as set forth in the present claims is a thermoplastic elastomer which is optically translucent, comprising a combination of syndiotactic polypropylene and an ethylene copolymer rubber which has an ethylene content of at least 74% and which is completely crosslinked.

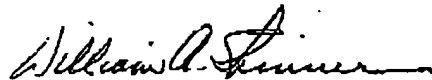
Masuda provides no suggestion that a translucent thermoplastic elastomer can be prepared from such a combination. Masuda is silent as to the effect of ethylene content in the rubber component, disclosing a maximum ethylene content of 73% in Example 5. Further, Masuda teaches directly away from complete crosslinking of the rubber component, emphasizing throughout that partial crosslinking is desired, and noting at column 4, lines 24-30, that excessive crosslinking of the rubber leads to a reduction in flowability of the thermoplastic elastomer resulting in inferior appearance and touch.

Applicants' specification provides evidence of an unexpected result in the claimed combination of syndiotactic polypropylene and copolymer rubber having an ethylene content of at least 74%. A direct comparison is made with compositions prepared from isotactic and random tacticity polypropylene (see Tables I and V), demonstrating that thermoplastic elastomers prepared using these materials have haze values in the range of 71-100% while those prepared using syndiotactic polypropylene have haze values in the range of 27-39%. A direct comparison is also made with compositions prepared from EPDM rubbers containing less than 74% ethylene (see Tables II and V). Thermoplastic elastomers prepared using rubbers with 48-72%

ethylene content have haze values of 51-90%, while those prepared using rubbers with 74% and higher ethylene content have haze values of 29-48%.

Reconsideration is requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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